

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Summary

Claims 1-6 are pending in the application. Claim 1 has been amended.

Claims 1-6 are pending in the application. The amendments to the claims are supported in the specification. No new matter has been added.

Rejection of Claims

35 U.S.C. § 112

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-6 under 35 U.S.C. §112, first and second paragraphs. With regard to the first paragraph, the Examiner said there was “failing to comply with the written description requirement. The claim(s) contains subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the relevant art that the inventor(s), at the time the application was filed, had possession of the claimed invention.” (Office action, page 2, lines 1-5).

Applicants have amended claims 1-6 by removing the terms “adaptable width” to overcome these rejections. Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to withdraw the rejections to claims 1-6.

With respect to the second paragraph, the Examiner states “Claims 1-6 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which the applicant regards as the invention. The metes and bounds of “adaptable width” can not be determined.” (Office action, page 2, lines 9-12). As stated above, Applicants have

amended claims 1-6 by removing the terms “adaptable width” to overcome these rejections. Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to withdraw the rejections to claims 1-6.

35 U.S.C. § 102 and 35 U.S.C. § 103

In the Office action, the Examiner rejected claims 1- 6 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as obvious over Davies et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,224,760). Claim 1 has been amended. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Amended claim 1 recites, “wherein a width of the elongated rib body (111) is adapted to the intermediate bed support rib (117) at a position along a length of the elongated rib body (111) that is adjacent to a tapered portion 116 of the intermediate bed support rib (117) or the intermediate bed support rib (119).”

Thus, the structure in claim 1 has an elongated rib body 111 with a width that is adjusted to the intermediate bed support rib 117 at a position along a length of the elongated rib body 111, which is adjacent to a tapered portion 116 of the intermediate bed support rib or the intermediate support rib 119. This structure enables a local effective channel height to become decreased in a more linear manner than in prior art devices, which is achieved by the width of the elongated rib body 111 being varied along lengths in order to reduce or eliminate discontinuities in the cross sectional area of the channel 113 formed between the ribs. (Specification, page 5, lines 29-33 and page 6, lines 1-10).

Davies et al. provides “A chromatography column having an end arrangement including an end plate having a fluid opening and a filter extending over an internal surface of the end plate to define a fluid low zone between them into which the fluid flow opens is disclosed. There is a liner between the end plate’s internal surface and the filter layer. The liner has a surface relief pattern to space the filter layer from the end plate and maintain the fluid flow zone across the filter.” (Abstract). The liner 9 also includes special features such as “major ribs 10a that extend substantially from the inner to the outer edge of the liner 9, while shorter set of ribs 10b, 10c and 10d are distributed between these, progressively away from the centre, to maintain the level of occupation of the flow zone by rib projections and therefore maintain a generally uniform support behind the filter layer 14, 15.” (Column 3, lines 45-60). However, Davies et al. does not anticipate, suggest or disclose an elongated rib body 111 with a width that is adjusted to the intermediate bed support rib 117 at a position along a length of the elongated rib body 111, which is adjacent to a tapered portion 116 of the intermediate bed support rib 117 or the intermediate support rib 119. In fact, Davies et al. specifically points out “The pattern of ribs as such is not critical, and may correspond to patterns already known for machining into an end plate.” (Column 3, lines 60-65). The pattern of the ribs, specifically, the widths of the elongated ribs is critical for this invention, in order for the local effective channel height to decrease which is necessary to reduce or eliminate discontinuities in the cross sectional area of a channel at the radial positions; where there are first and second intermediate support ribs 117, 119, the width of each elongated body 111 at any radial position is adapted

to partly or completely compensated for the reduction in channel cross sectional area caused by the presence of the intermediate support rib 117 so that the actual local effective channel height is at within 15% of the desired local channel height. (Specification, page 6, lines 10-16). Therefore, it is not obvious for Davies et al. to have an elongated rib body 111 with a width that is adjusted to the intermediate bed support rib 117 at a position along a length of the elongated rib body 111, which is adjacent to a tapered portion 116 of the intermediate bed support rib or the intermediate support rib 119 because Davies admitted that the rib patterns are not critical and may correspond to patterns already known for machining into an end plate.

For the foregoing reasons, claim 1 and 6 is not anticipated or in the alternative obvious over Davies et al. Claims 2-5 depend from independent claim 1. Therefore, claims 2-5 are also not anticipated by or obvious in view of Davies et al. as claims dependent upon allowable base claim 1. Applicants request the Examiner to withdraw the rejections of claims 1-6 as amended.

Conclusion

Pending claims 1-6 are patentable. Therefore, in view of the above amendments, Applicants respectfully submit that this application is in condition for allowance and such action is earnestly requested. If for any reason, however, the Examiner feels that a telephone interview would be helpful in resolving any remaining issues the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Applicants'

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undersigned attorney.

Early and favorable consideration is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

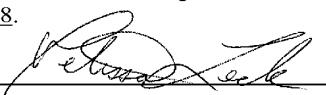
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